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NSC BRIEFING

3 JULY 1969

INDOCHINA

1. Major military news: Saigon French reverse southern Annam.

A. Army attaché terms French withdrawal in An Khe-Song Tan as

"Operation Atlanta" in reverse

1. "Atlanta Navarra breaching" clear enemy from Annam coastal strip. Started well, but operation bogged down in face enemy pressure.

French withdrawing from An Khe to Pleiku 25 June when attacked, lost over 1,000 men, entire mobile group HQ, 220 trucks.

B. Enemy pressure southern Annam makes French influence over even small sectors there problematical.

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1. Aside from region adjacent Cochinchina, Pleiku and Ban Ma Thuot are now only important French centers plateau areas.
2. Plateau areas important in denying Viet Minh lateral routes to Laos, Cambodia.
3. Also, Ban Dai has long-term dream of economic development for region.
4. Viet Minh build-up may be designed establish base this area for improved bargaining position in possible partition talks, also for later penetration Laos, Cambodia and Cochinchina after trace.

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II. In Cambodia, only bright spot of past week, Cambodian army evidenced much improvement.

A. Two battalions scored successes south of Phnom Penh.

B. Cambodian units defeated one battalion near Kratie, sent it retreating northward.

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